



REV. HENRY WILKES, D.D., LL.D.



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# JUBILEE SERVICES

HELD IN

## Zion Church, Montreal,

TO CELEBRATE

### THE 50th ANNIVERSARY

OF THE MINISTERIAL WORK OF

*REV. HENRY WILKES, D.D., LL.D.*

"With joy bringing his sheaves with him."

MONTREAL:

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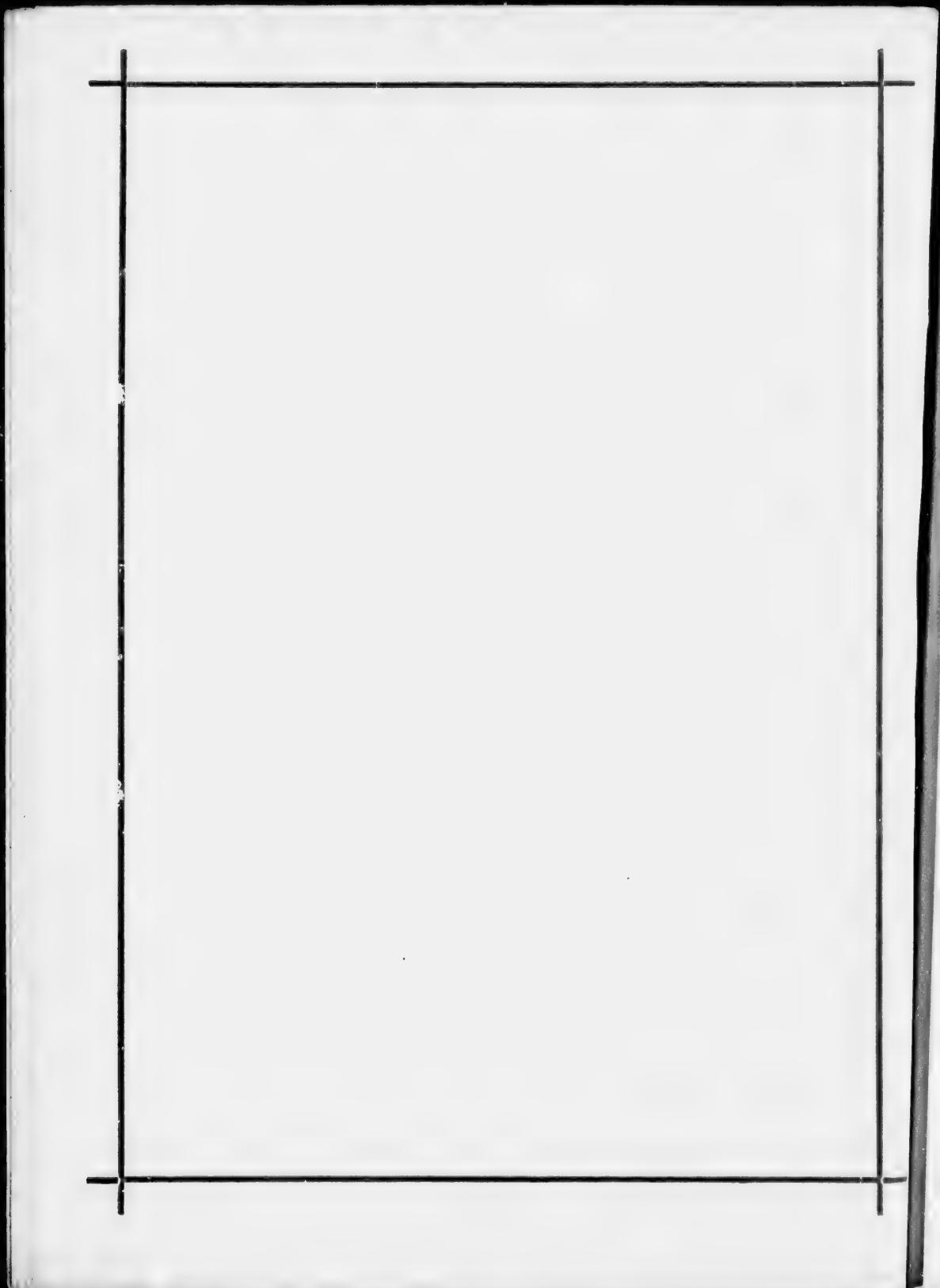
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THE anniversary, the celebration of which this pamphlet simply records, is one in which few pastors or congregations are allowed to share. To the Church, of which Dr. Wilkes has so long been an ornament and a defence, it has naturally been an occasion of solemn and thankful rejoicing. That it was regarded with sympathetic interest by other communions and by the community at large is sufficiently evidenced by the recognition of the venerable Doctor's services, as a pastor and a citizen, which it has evoked so generally from the Canadian press. These varied testimonials to his worth and work it has been thought well to append in a condensed form. Altogether apart from any personal references, the pamphlet, including the sermon of Dr. Wilkes, has no slight value to the general reader as presenting, in a pleasant form, an important chapter in Canadian religious and social history.

The likeness, recently taken, will be duly appreciated by the numerous friends of Dr. Wilkes, and will serve as an interesting memorial of the occasion.



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## ANNIVERSARY SERVICES.

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ON Sunday morning, the 13th October, 1878, Zion Church, Montreal, was filled by a very large and influential congregation to assist and take part in the "Jubilee Service" of the late pastor of the church, the Rev. Henry Wilkes, D.D., LL.D. The love and affection which the congregation bear for their aged pastor was exemplified in many ways. There were to be seen in all parts of the church the snow-white locks of men and women, who for over forty years had been cheered in their battle with the world by the kind advice of Dr. Wilkes which was always at their command. Beside them sat their children and their grandchildren ; all there to do honour to God's servant. His love and anxiety for the welfare of his flock, and especially of the young, were proverbial. None went to him in trouble that did not come away calm, and with renewed strength to face their difficulties. The church was richly and handsomely decorated for the occasion. Running along the organ gallery was a wreath of choice flowers intertwined with the delicate maiden

hair fern and smilax, while four vases filled with lilies, roses, etc., were placed on the gallery in front of the choir. In the recess in rear of the pulpit was a beautiful scroll, with the appropriate motto, "*With joy, bringing his sheaves with him,*" in red letters on a white ground. The pulpit, reading-desk, etc., were also decorated with lilies, roses, fuchias, ferns, smilax and cedar, the whole forming a chaste and pleasing appearance, and an affectionate tribute of love to their revered honorary pastor.

At eleven o'clock the Rev. Dr. Wilkes entered the Church accompanied by the Rev. Mr. Bray, the present pastor, and Rev. Mr. Forster, of Calvary Church.

The Rev. Mr. Forster opened the service by announcing the 644th hymn—

“ God my support and hope,  
My help for ever near,  
Thine arm of mercy held me up  
When sinking in despair.”

After prayer by Mr. Forster, the 832nd hymn was sung—

“ His work my hoary age shall bless,  
When youthful vigor is no more ;  
And my last hour of life confess  
His dying love, His saving power.”

The 103rd Psalm was impressively read by Mr. Forster, and after the singing of the Anthem, *Te Deum Laudamus*, the Rev. Mr. Bray engaged in prayer, drawing a picture of our fast disappearing summer and the coming

winter with its whiteness, adapting it to the occasion of the aged pastor, whose summer was on the wane, but who in the natural course of events would live in eternal sunshine, for he had earned well the reward of long and profitable labour among his fellow-men.

The 477th hymn was next sung, the different parts of the excellent choir blending together in an effective exposition of the beautiful words—

“ I give immortal praise  
To God the Father’s love,  
For all my comforts here,  
And better hopes above.”

The Organist, Dr. MacLagan, then played a most appropriate and brilliant voluntary, after which Dr. Wilkes proceeded to preach the following sermon.

# SERMON.

"BUT I WILL REMEMBER THE YEARS OF THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MOST HIGH."—*Psalm lxxvii, 10.*

THIS is the utterance of a man oppressed by some sorrow of the nature of which he makes no mention. He says, "My sore ran in the night and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted." He exclaims, "Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak." And yet he "Calls to remembrance his song in the night," when aforetime he was peaceful and glad. He considers, moreover, "the days of old, the years of ancient times;" and on the whole regards his present despondency as his infirmity, expressing his determination in the words of my text—"But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High." This he would do for his present comfort and cheer. I think we may do the same in the days of quiet and comfort, when we would magnify the name of the Lord for His mercies towards us. Amid the quieting influences of old age such remembrance is as appropriate as it is precious. The fires of passion and ambition are burned out, whether they were great or small; calmness has succeeded the excitement and bustle incident to a vigorous and enterprising course; so that one naturally looks back to the way along which God hath led us, remembering the years and His right hand. It is made the motto of reminiscences of a ministry of 50 years' duration.

According to strict technical usage, there would be a want of correctness in this dating, for the ministry is often regarded as commencing with the date of ordination to office. But, without entering into any disputed question about the meaning of ordination, my ministry began with the first sermon delivered to a congregation of my fellow-men, by one who had relinquished commercial pursuits, and had consecrated the remainder of his life to the Christian ministry.

Having spent six years in this city in connection with the house of the late John Torrance, first as a clerk, and having reached 22 years of age, as a partner for the last year, I left Montreal for Glasgow in the midsummer of 1828, that I might join myself to the University of that city, and to the Theological Academy of the Independents, conducted by the late Rev. Ralph Wardlaw, D.D., and Greville Ewing. This course was adopted, among other reasons, because Canada at the time was in great need of a thoroughly enlightened, well-trained Godly ministry, and because I had in hand the means of paying my way without dependence on any one. In October of the same year I preached at Govan, then a village two miles from Glasgow, a sermon on the text "Therefore if any be in Christ he is a new creature, old things have passed away, behold all things have become new," 2 Cor. 5, 17. It may appear to some strange that one in such a position should be urged to preach. But not only is it the practice of our denomination to give men opportunities of so doing as early in their course of study as is expedient; it so happened that I had already enjoyed good advantages of education, and withal of no little practice of public speaking in the Sunday School work of the American Presbyterian Church of this city, of which I had been a member upwards of two years. My memoranda show this

preaching ministry was more continuous than I should be disposed to permit to one of my students of the present day. A fortnight after the first sermon, there were two preached at Kilmarnock; the next fortnight, twice at Larkhall; the following Sunday, at Cambuslang; a month afterwards, twice at Hamilton; in January, twice at Hellensburgh; a fortnight after, twice at Greenock; then follow, prior to the 17th May, the names of Alloa, Ayr and Dunfermline as places of ministry for a day. Several of these places were supplied more than once. The midsummer of 1829 was spent in Ireland, in company with an Irish Deacon, of one of your churches in Scotland, who was in the habit of taking with him every year a preacher to minister among the people of his native land. Sunday and during the week he made arrangements, and I preached at Belfast, then at Londonderry, and then in hamlets, or in the open fields around the last mentioned city. It was a most encouraging service.

It would be of little interest to you were I further to recount the details of this form of ministerial work during the years 1830 and 1831, the summers of both of which years were spent in England, and that of the last of them in efforts for the good of Canada. The results of those efforts were the obtaining the services of the late Rev. Richard Miles, who formed this church, and was the first pastor; and also acquiring the nucleus of our present College Library. The precise scheme for the training of godly young men of promise for the Christian Ministry, which was then devised and partly executed, ultimately fell through, but the books remain, and the memory of the kindness and co-operation of such men as Dr. J. Pye Smyth and others, then in prominent positions and active service, still lives. In connection with the Educational plans just noted were others of an evangelistic and missionary character to be conducted on a

catholic basis, and these combined led to my spending the summer of 1832 in Canada in active ministerial work. Prior to leaving Glasgow for this port in the good brig "Favorite," Capt. James Allan, I was solemnly set apart and ordained to the Ministry with appropriate services in Dr. Wardlaw's Church, West George Street. The Sundays of a voyage of five weeks were cheered and improved by Divine Service on the deck, there being upwards of 100 souls on board, Captain Allan always co-operating most heartily. One of my hearers on those Sundays, then a young immigrant, told me not two months since that he had seldom seen me since, but that he remembered well the services on board the "Favorite." After a short stay in this city, the mission I had undertaken called me Westward and kept me busily employed during the summer, lecturing, preaching and holding public meetings. Meanwhile the dire disease, the cholera, swept away nearly one-tenth of the inhabitants of this city. On my return old friends were missed, while sadness and sorrow dwelt among survivors. Many years afterwards, I was informed by a Christian minister that one of these discourses by the way had greatly awakened him as a youth, and led him to seek and find a Saviour. Arrangements were made for my entrance during the following summer on a stated ministry at York, now Toronto, where, instead of at Montreal, there was every probability that my life work would be carried on. Had it been so, how different a narrative of experience and effort would have resulted! Much to my own disappointment at the time, the scheme fell through; and I became convinced that we must have systematic British help in order to ensure success in the introduction to Canada of Congregational churches and institutions.

At length, in April, 1833, having taken my degree of M.A., this itinerant ministry came to an end, by my settlement as pastor of the Albany Street Church, Edinburgh, to which I received within four names of a unanimous call; and the four were not objectors. This charge was accepted on the explicit and recorded understanding that when our British churches were prepared to take up Canada as a field for Colonial missions, should they desire my removal thither, my services would be at their command. Having thus spoken of a ministry extending from October, 1828, to April, 1833, one naturally inquires of what sort it was; an inquiry which reminds one of numberless imperfections and shortcomings, but which also brings out a prevailing desire to be useful in the conversion to Christ of the wandering, and in the stirring up to zeal and consecration those who already believed. The subject of the first sermon suggests the tone that pervaded them all. Men must be in Christ if they are to be saved—there is salvation in no other; “there is none other name under heaven” whereby or by whom that boon can be obtained. But to be in Christ is more than a profession, more than avowal, more than Baptism however administered, more than membership of a church, it is to be a new creature—to be born again of the Spirit of God to newness of life, and then to have that life working and manifesting itself in holy obedience—the “old things” of sin and death “passing away, and all things becoming new.” I do not forget that my urgency, often impassioned entreaty, in calling upon the people at once to turn unto the Lord, forsaking their rebellious attitude, brought upon me not infrequently the rebuke of grave and reverend seniors, whose theological conceptions were rudely assailed by such appeals. They were, however, reminded of one who besought men in Christ’s stead: “Be ye reconciled to God,” and of God

Himself saying to Israel, "Why will ye die?" I was urged to consider that, after all, many were not chosen to eternal life; I replied that God commanded all men everywhere to repeat that Christ was a Saviour of infinite sufficiency, and that so long as such texts as these were on record I could not refrain from publishing a free and complete Gospel: "The Spirit and the Bride say come, and let him that heareth say come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Meanwhile, the Lord added His gracious testimony by giving me seals to my ministry. I am reminded of one especially having far-reaching issues. A shrewd, intelligent man was walking aimlessly in the street about ten o'clock on Sunday morning, in a town some twelve miles from Glasgow. He was in much spiritual distress of soul, and knew not which way to turn. Being accosted by a friend he was asked to attend service in the Independent chapel, where a young man from America was to officiate that day. He complied, and the day's instruction was the means of his relief; he found rest in the Saviour, and in due time joined himself to the Church, bringing with him, of course, his young family. That was the family in which the world-renowned David Livingstone, the African missionary and explorer, was then a boy, for his father was the man who on that Sunday received the blessing. I did not learn these facts until more than twenty-five years afterwards. In looking back to these early years I have only further to say that I carried with me across the Atlantic a determined opposition to the all-prevailing use of intoxicants; took occasion to write in the Greenock newspapers on the subject of abstinence from what was admitted to be lawful, but which was not expedient, and throughout these five years the general benevolent objects of

the time and place had such advocacy as I was able to give them. We are not to forget that our Divine Master went about doing good. He liv' ' for it.

On the next period of three years as pastor in Edinburgh, Scotland, I must not dwell. It was a great enjoyment, and was most graciously blessed. I found in fellowship 140 members and left the number 240. My Bible Class was attended by a number of intelligent young people who were wont to write brief essays on Biblical subjects to submit to my criticism. That class contained two men who have since spent their active life as missionaries in China, and are now, in old age, retired from active service. Two others, one of whom has done the same in India, and the other now occupies a prominent position as pastor in England. During this period the voluntary controversy raged, to which I was called to contribute my quota of information and argument; was editor for two of the three years of the *Denominational Magazine*, coming into pleasant relations with certain friends, called Quakers, in England, who were outspoken in a conflict for the Evangelical faith. That ministry in Edinburgh was most pleasant and cheering, involving happy relations with men of a high type of character and culture, most of whom have passed away. Two dear friends remain, Rev. George Cullen, M.A., and Rev. Dr. William Lindsay Alexander,—both well stricken in years. The attention of the Congregational Churches of England having been turned towards Canada by the visit to the United States and these provinces of Revs. Drs. Reed and Matheson in 1834, correspondence was opened with me during 1835, involving a visit to London to meet the directors of the London Missionary Society on the policy required by the exigencies of the Canadian field. It was at length found incompatible with the great work

of that Society among heathen nations to deal effectively with Colonial wants—and there came about a conjunction of the two things, namely, a call from the Congregational Church in this city to the pastoral office which Mr. Miles had vacated that he might occupy a charge in the country, and a notification from London that if I would relinquish my Edinburgh charge and go out to Canada, acting as its agent, they would form the Colonial Mission of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. It was a sacrifice, but it was made, and after taking leave of an attached flock and assisting in London the work of construction, I sailed for New York, and found myself and family in Montreal early in August, 1836. I was met on landing at the wharf from the steamer from La Prairie by a number of friends—it is doubtful if any one of them survives except Mr. Henry Vennor—with whom from that date I have been on terms of intimate friendship. Though arriving in August I did not take charge here until the first Sunday in October, for I had to visit the leading points in Upper Canada and in the townships of Lower Canada, as agent of the Colonial Mission. The design was to furnish that Society with general and local information by which they might be guided in selecting and sending out suitable ministers of Jesus Christ.

Before passing from this second epoch let me say that one's faith was sorely tried again and again, as the present in Montreal was contrasted with the past in Edinburgh. I could not have ventured on the change without much earnest prayer for Divine guidance—there was no present or prospective pecuniary benefit in the case, but rather loss—and yet, for a number of years, I had not so large a congregation as I had left, and what was more discouraging, there was not granted me the same measure of spiritual success. I left a membership of 240 to find one of less than 50: and though my hearers in the evening were numerous,

they did not reach the aggregate in Edinburgh. You may ask, "Did you complain, abuse the country and the people, and express your sorrow for having come?" Nothing of the kind

not an individual knew how I felt, and besides I was cheered by the thought that Divine direction had been earnestly sought, and that not only was I engaged in laying foundations in this city, but also doing the same in districts east and west. I have long since learned that true success in Christ's Kingdom, as in many other relations, is a matter of slow growth, and that it is needful that the Lord's workmen should in patience possess their souls. Our tendency is to make haste, but our Sovereign Lord and Master shows that such is not His plan. He is never in a hurry. "One day is with Him as 1,000 years and 1,000 years as one day."

The third period to which these memories refer extends from October 2, 1836, to May 14, 1871, during which 35 years I was the sole pastor of the Church in this city, which for the first ten years met in St. Maurice Street Chapel, and the remaining twenty-five years in this building. And of course within this period my principal life work has been carried forward. My beloved friend, Rev. Richard Miles, left a membership of 48 and an average congregation of about 100. There was a debt upon the building not very far from its value. One half the basement was leased to a merchant as cellarage; there were no galleries nor vestry. My entrance upon duty was without observation, for there were no churches with their pastors within reach to constitute a council or to conduct recognition services. The few people were of one mind, and that one mind was to serve the Lord and to promote the interests of the Church. The general attendance upon the ministry grew steadily, as did the membership of the Church. The congregations in the

evening frequently filled the little building, for at the time evening services in the churches was not the rule, and members of the Episcopalian and Presbyterian congregations frequented my evening ministry. French Canadian young men attended that service professedly to improve their knowledge of the English language. The steady growth of the congregation induced the Church to occupy, for the Sunday School and week night services, the entire basement, to erect a vestry for a retiring room for the minister and for a Bible Class, and then to erect galleries, thereby increasing the accommodation. During this latter process we united in services with our friends of the American Presbyterian Church, and their then pastor, Rev. Caleb Strong. With that Church we have always had the most friendly relations, as also with that so long under the care of the late Rev. Dr. Taylor. Indeed we have had much kindly, fraternal intercourse with most of the Protestant churches whose arrangements permitted such fellowship. We have loved and desired to promote a true Christian Catholicity. As we prospered we paid off our indebtedness, both the original and that arising from improvements and enlargements, rejoicing in freedom from that burden, and celebrating the event in a sermon on the text, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God."

The progress alluded to and the need of another congregation with its minister to assist in the general work of the denomination, led to the formation of a second church under the care of Rev. J. J. Carruthers, now, and for the last 30 years, of Portland, Maine. They met for a time in a hall and then erected a church building. This last was too expensive a movement for their number and means, and ultimately crushed the once hopeful cause. The introduction also of the Free Church of Scotland movement on

the visit of the late Dr. Burns, and their choice of an eastern position in the city, naturally, though innocently, interfered with the progress and success of the second Church enterprize. It should not be lost sight of, however, that the two pastors trained for the Christian ministry a few young men who have proved themselves workmen who need not to be ashamed, several of whom sprang out of that Church during its active existence. The small Theological School which they founded was afterwards united with that already existing at Toronto, and which is now in this city as the Congregational College of B. N. A. The disruption in Scotland led several families, who deeply sympathised with it, to attend my ministry for a time, and to seek communion with the Church until they saw what they could do in our city to promote an object dear to them. Their temporary union with us was very pleasant, and they left with our best wishes for their prosperity in the work of the Lord. They have mostly passed away, but my intercourse with them always was, and is with the survivors, most fraternal. Towards the close of our occupancy of the building in St. Maurice Street, there was made a very vigorous and persistent effort by means of tracts and printed sheets circulated in offices, warehouses and other places, especially among young men, to shake their confidence in the great facts of the Trinity, our Lord's divinity, the personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit, human depravity, our Lord's atonement and others which the Church generally regards as of a fundamental nature. Believing it the duty of some one, and why not myself? to meet this outburst of zeal on the side of error, I announced a series of discourses on the subjects in view of the Arian and Socinian controversies. The building, seating about 500, was packed for nine successive Sabbath evenings with attentive listeners, among whom, be it said to their

credit, were many who favored the negative theology. I shall ever bless God for the result. Many waverers were assured ; and there followed the turning to the Lord of not a few who had been halting between two opinions. I am not favorable to rushing at all times into controversy, for it often distracts the mind without any corresponding benefit. But there are occasions when it is our duty to stand for the defence of the Gospel, and I have ever thought that this was one of them. During all this period I was Secretary to our Auxiliary Bible Society, and from 1839 an active promoter and officer of the French Canadian Missionary Society. It was my custom to make an annual visit to our newly-planted churches in the Eastern Townships, and also north-west of the city. As I drove my own sleigh and went alone, I had some rough experience amid our severe winter storms.

During several weeks of one summer I was engaged, at the instance of the Mission, in visiting Nova Scotia and New Brunswick ; looking after our lonely churches there, and making arrangements for the occupancy of new fields. At St. John I preached in churches of several denominations, and was received with remarkable kindness by, in some instances, crowded congregations. It should also be noted as a feature of the times amongst us, that the Mercantile Library Association and the Mechanics' Institute came into existence, the first mentioned largely through the energy of the late Hon. John Young. Lectures then began to be desired ; and I prepared and delivered free of any charge quite a number on Commerce, and on the elements of Mental and Moral Science. These were delivered in public halls ; and I remember one occasion when the Earl of Elgin and his suite were on the platform, and after my lecture on "Freedom of Mind," that nobleman, then Governor-General, delivered an

eloquent address to the Association. About these days the question of our Colleges came up for adjustment, and we held public meetings in advocacy of a liberal, non-denominational policy in their management. An amended charter was obtained for McGill securing this end, and the University of Toronto was placed on a similar basis. Our annual meetings of Bible, Tract, and Sunday School Societies were wont to be held at different periods of the year as their committees might determine. It fell to my lot to suggest an anniversary week, which has been the course for nearly all the years since the erection of the large Methodist Church on St. James Street. Our Orphan Asylum, Ladies' Benevolent Society, and other charities demanded and obtained such help as one could afford in the advocacy of their claims. The late Dr. Bethune, Mr. Esson and myself, with a number of lay gentlemen, inaugurated the High School, the clerical portion of the originators retiring from a prominent position from motives of expediency having relation to the welfare of the institution. Several ladies' educational institutions which have proved a great blessing to our city have received such attention and help as it was possible to afford them. Quite a large portion of the successive pupils in two of them attended my ministry regularly, constituting a very intelligent part of my audience. Students in the School of Medicine and other students were among my hearers. I have met in my journeyings with several of them in full practice, whose reminiscences were pleasant to them and encouraging to me. The Ministerial Association of Montreal originated with five of us, of whom I am the only survivor; it was formed about 1837 or 1838, and yet continues in existence. I have only further to say in regard to some of these movements, which were in their nature rather for the general benefit of society than strictly

religious, that I have always had and retain the conviction that the true minister of Christ is only in his place when he is advocating and promoting the general good. He is a friend and helper in every good work.

The twenty-five years in Zion Church were of the same general nature as the ten years already described. The church and congregation grew in numbers, in intelligence and in influence. I suppose it will be admitted that they became a very great power in the community, and that their influence extended for good far and wide. But the first ten years were very trying financially. The change in the commercial policy of the Mother Country necessarily affecting colonial interests which had sprung up under the former system, produced much distress and disaster in this commercial centre. The ground on which this building had been erected was not paid for, and was, after five years, now becoming due, and this amid great commercial depression. I went to England with my tale of difficulty and distress, having the full sanction of the Colonial Missionary Society. Oh, it was hard work, for I hated to ask any one for money. But they allowed me to tell my story in their pulpits, and they read my printed appeal, and I moved among them, often weary, and heart as well as foot sore, and as the result of the six months' toil, I brought with me £1,000 sterling, and paid for the land which, indeed, had been purchased in my name. But there was still a heavy incubus of debt which was not lifted off for some years, and which necessarily affected unfavourably ministerial stipend. For fifteen years I received considerably less than my ministerial brethren in the city of the same standing. But I neither starved nor did I incur debt; hence have no complaint to make. My people began of their own accord to increase the inadequate stipend as

the finances of the church enabled them so to do. This was done spontaneously and several times, until at length it became an average amount—paid, let me say to their credit, always punctually.

A sketch of my ministry in Montreal should contain an allusion to a practice continued for many years of cultivating most friendly and fraternal relations with Christian brethren in the United States. On three occasions I was honoured by calls to address at College commencements certain of their theological or literary societies—Darmouth College in 1847. University of Vermont in 1850. Middlebury College in 1860. But apart from these invited occasions, I have attended frequently the meetings of State Associations, the Annual Meetings of the American Board for Foreign Missions, and other anniversary services, besides preaching for my brethren in Boston, Portland, Hartford, New York, Brooklyn and other places. The time was when the present cordial feeling did not exist between the Canadian and American people of the United States; I deemed it alike a duty and a privilege to do all in my power to promote that which has since become a joy to us on both sides the boundary line.

In the year 1862 leave of absence for five or six months was granted me, and a purse to aid in defraying expenses was put into my hand, that with my eldest daughter I might visit England and the Continent. These months were thoroughly occupied in a most enjoyable manner. Scenes of nature and of art were photographed on the memory, and in the autumn pastoral work was resumed with fresh impulse and energy.

That I have always understood to mean, primarily, preaching and teaching in the best manner possible to one. How can that be done with anything like freshness and power among

the same people for a period of thirty-five years? Well, first, they do not really continue to be the same people. The children grow to be men and women, and the middle-aged become aged. Many remove, and in a city like this many are continually arriving. But, second, the Bible is a wonderful book, affording endless variety of the most interesting and instructive teachings. I have 1,600 MSS., for the most part discourses, written out, but hardly ever delivered just as they were written. There are biographical sketches from our first parents down to Moses. The parables and miracles of our Lord were examined for purposes of instruction, and so the life and labours of the Apostle Paul. The Epistles of Peter, the first Epistle of John, two chapters in Isaiah, the whole Epistle to the Hebrews were expounded and their lessons enforced. These are but a sample —there was much else after the same manner. Current events were used for illustration and instruction. I was not eloquent; indeed, from a mistaken dread lest I should be found preaching myself rather than Christ, I have never done my very best in elaborating a discourse—hardly ever having written one twice. I do not commend this. We ought to produce the very best we can, now and again, and yet do it not for our own credit and distinction, but for the glory of our Master. Yet, I do not repent my one prevailing desire for usefulness in my preaching; that I commend to all. And now, thirdly, the Godward of truth has been made prominent in my ministry. There is a humanitarianism in the pulpit sometimes which grievously sins by omission. I believe in man's communion with God, as well as in the communion of saints. We may not without great and fatal loss neglect the claims of God. He, great, glorious, and blessed—He must be magnified and adored if we are to be good practical Christians. You may dilate on the beauty of

virtue, you may insist on a manly and honorable course of life, you may fling scorn and contempt on the little, the mean, the wrong, dwelling thus on the human, the manward side of truth, and you may do some good and avert some evil ; but, if you would transform men into lovers of truth and righteousness, lovers of one another in Christ, if you would raise them out of themselves and up to that character to which it is the great purpose of the Gospel to bring them, you must draw them into personal contact with the ever-blessed God in Christ Jesus our Lord ; they must come to the Cross of the Redeemer, look up to Him in faith, trust and consecration, and thus live ! If we keep our people at the nether springs, not only will they lack the kind of water they need, but the springs themselves will become dry to them. The upper springs feed the lower, take them up to the higher plane. I have had to fight many a battle against what I regarded as exaggerations and errors in the faith called Orthodox, and have insisted on dealing with difficult questions with common sense, but the grand old verities themselves stand fast as the throne of God ! I have seen them work marvels on men and women—marvels of grace.—Pastoral Work—I understand it to include, "Watching for souls as they who must give account," and this necessarily demands no little personal intercourse. I have sometimes thought that more benefit was conferred on many of my hearers by such private ministration than by pulpit utterances. My habit was to have an hour or more three times a week in my vestry, assigned to this kind of service. Inquirers, persons spiritually in perplexity, and those in sorrow and those in doubt were wont to come to me with their questions, their doubts, their trials, and receive pastoral counsel and instruction. Our churches throughout the country having increased in number, involving augmented labour on my part in

correspondence and otherwise, my engagements and pulpit preparation precluded much or frequent visiting except in cases of sickness ; but this access to myself at stated and known hours supplied some of the want.

I have great reason to be grateful for no inconsiderable success. Very many have been led to embrace the Saviour in His blessed person and work as all in all to them. Very many have encouraged me by declaring their indebtedness to this Ministry under God for great comfort and strength in the trials and battles of life, and others for mental and spiritual training in the school of Christ. To Him who helped me and blessed my work be all the praise. I would that more had been done in the way of self-improvement, and that I had used to much greater extent the power of the press. Let my younger brethren take note of this regret and foster by their every effort a healthy literature. Let them cultivate the talent and use it well. Our *Denominational Magazine* has never been fairly treated by any of us. Let the same not be said of the coming weekly. And now age crept on though vigour remained. A three months' holiday, in 1867, enabled me to revisit friends in England and Scotland, to inspect the Exposition in Paris, and to attend the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in Amsterdam, Holland. In 1869, the death of Dr. Lillie, at the commencement of the College Session, laid on me extra work in the matter of college lectures. In 1870, the brethren in the West and here, and in England, called me into my present position, and thus in the following May the pastorate was transferred to the Rev. Charles Chapman, and I became merely pastor *emeritus*. I need not speak of my subsequent ministry during the last seven years ; it has included no little preaching both in Canada and England, where six months of 1874 were spent ; but its main effort has been to bring to bear

upon the young men who are preparing to enter upon their great and important work whatever of acquirement and of experience I may have obtained by God's goodness during this long ministry. And now what shall be the conclusion of this imperfect review of a ministry extending over half a century? Before the Lord I bow with humility, because of much short-coming and imperfection, and I lift up my heart with thanksgivings for unnumbered favours. Whatever planting and sowing I may have done it was He that gave the increase. Before my fellow-man I bear testimony that self-denial and self-sacrifice in God's service become in one's hand a cup of joy and blessing. The choice made fifty years ago is vindicated by the issue. Wealth was not chosen, and it did not come, and sometimes comparative poverty was for the time inconvenient. But usefulness to one's fellow-man was chosen, and through God's goodness it did come abundantly. One exceedingly rejoices not to have lived in vain. One is thankful beyond measure that the ministry has left its impress for good on a great multitude of people here and elsewhere. There is a spiritual force that descends from one generation to another, so that we being dead in due time, yet speak. I have loved this work of ministry in all its parts with a sort of passionate fondness, notwithstanding its trials and disappointments, and to-day I remember with gratitude, homage and joy, the years of the right hand of the Most High.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

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THE Rev. Dr. Wilkes has been specially identified with the religious history of the city of Montreal, and indeed with that of the country generally. In the summer of 1820, the family of which he was the eldest son arrived in Upper Canada, from Birmingham, England, where he was born in 1805, and entered into business in Montreal in 1822, first as a clerk, and then as a partner, till 1828. In the summer of that year, he proceeded to Glasgow, Scotland, with the intention of pursuing a course of study for the ministry. He became connected with the Theological School of the Independents, in Scotland, and entered the University of Glasgow. The summer vacation of 1832 was spent in Canada, in the performance of certain public duties, chiefly in the Western province. Immediately after taking his degree of M.A., Mr. Wilkes entered upon the pastorate of the Church in Edinburgh to which he had been unanimously called. At the end of three years of a successful Ministry, he was appointed by the Colonial Mission of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, which had just been organized, to represent them in Canada, and the congregation of Montreal sent him a call to become their pastor. In August,

1836, he arrived, and proceeding Westward, occupied some time in visiting various sections of the country, with a view to place Ministers of the Gospel. He returned, and took charge of the church now called Zion Church, on October 1, 1836. He retains to the present time the position connected with the English Society, and until May, 1871, he was the sole pastor of Zion Church. Since that date, though retaining, at the request of the congregation, a nominal relationship with the Church, he has retired from its active duties and responsibilities. Since June, 1870, he has been Principal of the Congregational College of British North America, and Professor of Theology, &c., therein. In the year 1850, he received, unsolicited, from the University of Vermont, the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity, and more recently from McGill University that of LL.D. Intimately connected with the labours of Dr. Wilkes as a Christian Minister in Montreal, is the history of Zion Church, with which, as we have said, he still retains a nominal pastoral relationship. This Church took its rise in a small community of Christian people who, in the year 1832, assembled for public worship under the pastoral care of the Rev. Richard Miles, in Mr. Bruce's School Room, McGill Street, and afterwards in the large room of what was then known as the Mansion House, College Street. Arrangements were speedily made to erect a place of worship, and the site in St. Maurice Street being secured, a neat edifice was erected and dedicated in 1834. Mr. Miles retiring

to the country, Mr. Wilkes assumed the pastorate in 1836. Galleries were erected and other improvements made in 1839. In the year 1844, the present site of Zion Church was secured; the foundation of the building was laid in 1845, and in November, 1846, it was solemnly dedicated, the late Rev. Dr. McGill of St. Pauls, Mr. Strong of the American Presbyterian, and Dr. Matthew Richey of the Methodist Church, preaching at the three services. The building was enlarged in 1864, but destroyed by fire in 1867. It was rebuilt and opened in its present state in the spring of 1868. In the year 1870, Dr. Wilkes was appointed to the Chair of Theology in the Congregational College, but in consequence of his long connection with the Church, together with his still being able to render occasional assistance, no formal resignation of his official position was made or desired.

## OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

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(Montreal "Gazette.")

We heartily join our congratulations to those of the very large circle of friends and admirers by whom Dr. Wilkes is loved and revered. It is the lot of few ministers to have spent half a century in the service of their Master, and not many have been so singularly blessed in their work as Dr. Wilkes has been. For the greater part of that time his name has been as a household word to the members of his own church, while he has also deservedly won the esteem and confidence of large numbers belonging to other denominations. Two generations have listened to his words of love, of warning, of sympathy. He has aided in training a goodly number of young men for the sacred ministry. He has taken a distinguished share in all those works of benevolence, in all those efforts for the public good, in which persons of different creed may co-operate. He has thus fulfilled his duty as a citizen no less than as a Christian minister, and by the inhabitants of Montreal, without distinction as to religion, he is esteemed and beloved. The anniversary services to which we have referred will, therefore, have an interest for a circle much more extended than that of those who look up to Dr. Wilkes as a pastor. Speaking in their behalf, we congratulate him on the length of days with which Divine Providence has favored him, that if it is God's will, he may still be spared to spend many happy years among those who love and honor him.

(Montreal "Herald.")

A half-century of ministerial life is a noteworthy event. Tomorrow will be the fiftieth anniversary of the Reverend Dr. Wilkes'

admission to the ministry, and was to have been marked by his usual anniversary sermon, which, however, has been postponed till next Sunday in consequence of his being slightly indisposed. The reminiscences of fifty years of a useful and honorable life passed in the spiritual care of two generations, in the training of young men who are now themselves at the head of influential churches, and in active participation in the charitable works of the city, have a wider interest than for the congregation of Zion Church alone. The qualities of an eminent clergyman and a good citizen unite to call for the heartiest congratulations upon this jubilee, an occasion which, we understand, will be commemorated by the Reverend Doctor's former parishioners in a more lasting manner.

(Montreal "Witness.")

Throughout his discourse, which occupied exactly fifty-seven minutes, the venerable minister never once faltered, but in that beautifully full, clear voice in which he always speaks, his delivery was firm and with increasing fervour to the end—in fact, the zeal and earnestness of youth appeared to fire his devoted soul as he dwelt upon the value and importance of the foundation truths of that Gospel of free salvation which he had steadfastly upheld and preached for half a century, and the effect upon his hearers was most impressive. The service closed with the singing of the Doxology, and the Benediction, pronounced by Dr. Wilkes. If long years of faithful labor in presiding, not only over the affairs of a congregation, but practically over those of an important, if not large, denomination, may claim acknowledgment—if venerable age and seniority in a sacred service may claim reverence—if a wide and loving charity toward all may claim affection—the occasion of Dr. Wilkes' Jubilee sermon deserves notice from the people of Montreal, and the life of which it is an interesting retrospect, their gratitude and esteem; that his bright example and useful activity may long be spared to the city and country is the prayer of many.

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## (Montreal "Star.")

Fifty years' service in the work of the Church is a long period to look back to, and the reflection is all the more pleasing when it is considered that almost the whole of that time has been spent in connection with one church, whose present members, each one of them, have grown up as it were under the eye of their pastor, whom they have come to regard in the light of a still closer relationship. Possibly no minister in Canada is better known or more deservedly respected by his fellow workers of other churches, and these will one and all watch with interest the golden wedding—the jubilee of the Rev. Doctor's long and successful ministerial career. As a citizen and as a philanthropist Dr. Wilkes has occupied a distinguished position, and we sincerely trust that his days may yet be long spared to watch over the successes of those institutions with which he has for so long been so eminently connected.

## (Montreal "La Minerve.")

A touching anniversary was celebrated last Sunday, at Zion Church, of the 50th ministerial year of Rev. Dr. Wilkes. Although we do not belong to the creed of the Rev. Doctor, we may bear testimony to the esteem and respect which he enjoys among his own people, as well as among intelligent persons of all sects. His career has been one of ample labor. Through his high-mindedness and large views he has rendered his social relations as agreeable as they are useful, and he reaps in his old age the fruits of a long life of labor and charity.

## (Montreal "Le National.")

During the fifty years of Dr. Wilkes' ministry, Montreal has been transformed. The great city, with its richly decorated buildings and the park which overlooks it, was then in a condition which gave no clue to its present prosperity. How many works of human genius has Dr. Wilkes seen accomplished, such as the separation of Upper and Lower Canada, the confederation of the British North American Provinces, the building of the Intercolonial, the enlargement of our canals, and the immense enterprise of the Pacific Railway. Wholly

absorbed in his mission, Dr. Wilkes has seen all these things realized. He has seen men and things triumph, while he too triumphs on his side by study and meditation. To this distinguished fellow-citizen the people of Montreal extend the wish of a long career and happiness in the paths of rectitude.

(Montreal "Canadian Spectator.")

It is not often that in this age of terrific energy—when men think fast, and work hard, and wear out quickly—that it is given to any man to speak of fifty years of labor. We are greatly developed: in a wonderful degree we are masters of ourselves, and the press of circumstance is so severe that we are compelled to do much work in a little time. Therefore it is the more to be noted that Dr. Wilkes, of Montreal, could stand up and say: For half a century I have been a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. With bodily force somewhat impaired, but with mental vigour unabated, he stood forth and spoke his words of history and of hope. It was a rare occasion, and the audience was a sight to witness. Almost every Protestant Church was represented. Old men and women went to hear again the voice of him from whose lips they had heard in the youth long dead—but not forgotten—words of counsel and rebuke. What a flood of memory must have rushed in upon them! Fifty years of battle—sometimes marked by defeat and sometimes by victory—hopes kindled and quenched—joy and sorrow crowding each on the heels of the other—all looking back through a long vista of years, and on to the coming of night. How much work the preacher had done in that time, not even himself could tell; enough that he had set in motion great influences for good, which have gone working on making men out of children, and good out of stuff indifferent. Forty-two years ago Dr. Wilkes came to Canada in a semi-missionary character. Congregationalism was hardly known here, and the Dr. thinking it should be well known, and having convinced the Church of that name and order in England of the same necessity, obtained the needful help. That missionary character has been sustained by him throughout his long and useful career. He has been from the first until now the head of the denomination—its principal counsellor and guide—second to no one as preacher—the accredited leader in all matters of organization—filling all possible offices—doing all possible work—as preacher going from end to

end of the country—as secretary for various societies—as treasurer administering their funds—and as president of the only college in the denomination in this country. This last was inevitable, for the Dr. always took a warm and wise interest in the work of educating young men for the ministry. Knowing well the advantages of culture, he sought to send forth men well prepared for their sacred work. But along with all this general work for the denomination has been carried the particular function of a pastor in Montreal—which means that Dr. Wilkes found here a church having a membership of a little over forty—worked on, winning the esteem of the whole Protestant community—preached on, drawing many by the strength of his words—and so built up a church, which for numbers, for wealth, and for influence was hardly second to no church in the Dominion. To do that in the City of Montreal meant the exercise of ability and patience of no ordinary kind.\* \* \* This work was not accomplished without hard toiling and pain, as the Dr. told us on Sunday morning. There were times of heart-sickening disappointment—times of weary waiting in comparative obscurity and poverty which must have been a sore trial to the man's faith. It is hard to believe that we are right in our calling and our choice of place when success will not be wooed nor commanded; hard to believe that we ought to work on and wait when we cannot see what the working and waiting will bring. Yet that is just what Dr. Wilkes did; uttered no complaint; refused to loose heart or hope; went bravely on, and found his reward in the appreciation of many people and the satisfaction of his own heart. \* \* But worth all the rest was the splendid protest made that self-sacrifice is worth the doing. I looked up in wonder and admiration—an old man with robust frame and kindling eye, and hand uplifted to Heaven—was telling us in tones that rang out clear and strong over the great audience, that to live unselfishly, in poverty, and disappointment, for men and for God, is the way to peace. An old man of seventy-three years told us life is worth the living and death is not a thing to fear. A man who has preached for half a century all he knew of truth and hope and life, was still glad to preach and speak strong words of comfort to young and old. There was no complaining, no halting—no bitter criticism of men and institutions, but a broad charity—a living hope, a clinging glad faith in well nigh every sentence. I hope the whole denomination will seek and find some way of conveying to our good Dr. its sense of his worth. I hope he will get some

of the honor he so well deserves while he is able to enjoy it. It is good to have the sermon—it will be better if we can copy the example he has given of good living and patient able working.

(Quebec "Chronicle.")

The Montreal papers publish full reports of an interesting sermon preached on Sunday last in Zion Church, Montreal, by the Rev. Dr. Wilkes. The occasion had been announced as a jubilee service in honor of the date, it being the fiftieth anniversary of the first sermon preached. His reminiscences of fifty years in the Ministry of the Gospel commanded the strictest attention of the congregation. When a young man, twenty-two years of age, Mr. Wilkes was a partner in the house of the late John Torrance of Montreal. This position he voluntarily resigned to enter a theological college in Scotland and study for the ministry, the same self-denying spirit subsequently leading him to give up the pastorate of a church in Edinburgh with a congregation having a membership of 240, and to come out again to Montreal and take charge of one numbering less than 50 souls. Since that date, October, 1836, the reverend gentleman has been pastor of Zion Church, and as every citizen of Montreal, and hundreds of people in all parts of the Dominion are well aware, he has been foremost in all good works. Not only the new Congregational College in Montreal, but the High School, Orphan Asylum, Ministerial Association and French Canadian Missionary Society, owe their origin, to a very great extent, to his earnest efforts in their behalf. During a large portion of the term of Dr. Wilkes' pastorate in Montreal, we regret to say that his stipend was considerably less than that of his ministerial brethren in the city, of the same standing. We feel fully assured that the reverend gentleman's many friends and admirers throughout the country would be glad of an opportunity of testifying in a practical manner their appreciation of and admiration for the self-denying Christian labors of Dr. Wilkes' Gospel Ministry of over half a century.

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(St. John, N.B., "Telegraph.")

The Rev. Dr. Wilkes of Zion Church, Montreal (Congregational), lately celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ministry in that city by preaching a sermon on "Fifty years of Ministerial Work." In this sermon he modestly describes a remarkable ministerial career. Dr. Wilkes, when a young man, was engaged in business in the house of John Torrance & Co., of Montreal, and had become a partner. Impressed with the spiritual necessities of the country, he relinquished business and proceeded to Glasgow, studying literature, science and philosophy at the University and theology under Dr. Wardlaw and his associates. He returned to Canada and came near being settled in Toronto, but failing, returned and was for several years pastor of a church in Edinburgh. On the occasion of a sermon he once preached near Glasgow, the father of David Livingstone, the missionary and explorer, was converted and his family brought into communion with the church. Aided by the home church, Dr. Wilkes, after four or five years, came out to Montreal and settled in it, marking several commercial and religious vicissitudes. He not only preached and visited much, but often prepared lectures on commercial, scientific and theological subjects. He visited the Maritime Provinces occasionally and preached in several pulpits in Saint John. The facts stated show that the ministry of Dr. Wilkes has been singularly fruitful. The *Herald's* report of the sermon states that "during the delivery of his discourse, the weight of 73 years of a long and useful life seemed to have flown and the vigor of a young man of 35 or less was apparent. His voice and intonation were as clear as in his youngest days, and at times the fire that battled for the rights and truth of the Master against error shone out brilliantly." So honored and successful a pastorate and career fall to the lot of few ministers, more especially in these later days of disquiet and unrest.

(Kingston "Whig.")

On Sunday morning last Rev. Dr. Wilkes, President of the Congregational Conference, Montreal, preached a sermon, in which he reviewed his ministerial labours, extending over a period of fifty years, his present age being over 73 years. The sermon was a remarkable effort, showing evidence of the old-time earnestness and vigour. Dr. Wilkes chose the ministry because he believed he could,

in it, best benefit his fellow-men, and he has succeeded to the fullest extent. His preaching has been productive of rich fruits, which have lent a cheering influence to the reverend gentleman in his old age. Zion Church was crowded when the sermon was delivered.

(Toronto "Mail.")

The Montreal papers contain the sermon preached on Sunday last by Rev. Dr. Wilkes, of Zion Congregational Church of that city, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his consecration to the ministry. Dr. Wilkes has indeed labored long and earnestly in the vineyard, and we trust the hour of the Master's calling him is yet long in the future. It is given to but few to look back upon half a century's attachment to the holiest of causes, and feel that the good fight has been well fought.

(Hamilton "Times.")

Sabbath before last, Zion Church (Congregational) in Montreal was crowded to hear Dr. Wilkes preach an especial sermon on "Fifty Years of Ministerial Work," it being the jubilee anniversary of his distinguished career in the pulpit. The discourse was in a measure historical, as the venerable divine reviewed in a hasty sketch the progress Canada has made since the date of his entering the ministry—1828. In his youth the means of travel were so poor that several days and nights were consumed before the journey from Montreal to Toronto could be made. Hardship, exposure, accident, weariness and delays were nearly always experienced, and the trip was one that was dreaded. If this were true of so much travelled a route, what must have been the calls on the physical endurance of the doctor as well as all the clergymen of that day, whose duties compelled them to visit the backwoods as well as the frontier? Of a truth, the people of this country owe a debt of deep obligation to the men—we refer to all denominations alike—who courageously withstood the rigors of the climate and, dauntless in face of every obstacle, carried on the noble work in which they were engaged—a work that was essentially necessary (though little recognized at the time) to mould the character of the country aright. These good men made sacrifices that would appall many of their successors and

have left names about which a halo of glory might well be thrown. Nearly all have passed to their reward, but a few are still with us and it is no wonder when they celebrate the anniversaries of their consecration to their sacred duties, they meet with a cordial recognition from a large-hearted Christian public.

(London "Free Press.")

The last fifty years have witnessed not only many advances in material progress, but many changes in religious thought. Reviewing the history of half a century, the Church has at many times been in apparent peril; but the attacks which it has sustained have had the effect of enlarging its borders and lifting it more and more out of narrow sectarianism into the sphere of broad and enlightened thought, till the religious teachings of to-day, in their charity, present a pleasing contrast to the too frequent dogmatism that prevailed fifty years ago. These thoughts must have been present with Rev. Dr. Wilkes, honorary minister of Zion Congregational Church of Montreal, who last Sunday preached, notwithstanding his advanced age, an extremely vigorous sermon on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his entering the ministry. It is not given to many to review so long a life-labor in the service of the Church, nor are there many who can look over so long a life of well-spent years. Dr. Wilkes' name has been associated in Montreal with every philanthropic movement; and his efforts have been largely blessed in increasing the prosperity of the Church with which he has been so long associated. Not only by his learning and zeal, but by his large hearted charity will he live in the memory of his congregation and the Christian public of the city where he has labored since 1836. It is with just pride that Rev. Dr. Wilkes can look back on his long superintendency of the Congregational Church and see how abundantly his efforts have prospered, and how a small meeting house, with its fifty attendants, have given place to a spacious church and a large and intelligent congregation, and those who have sat under the Doctor for years will not quickly forget the benevolent pastor who has labored so long in their midst.

(Brantford "Courier.")

On Sunday last a very interesting service was held in Zion Church, Montreal, being the celebration of the fifty years' ministry of the Rev. Dr. Wilkes. The church was crowded on the occasion and floral decorations covered the pulpit and reading desk as tokens of love and reverence for the venerable gentleman. After the service, which was conducted by the Rev. A. J. Bray and Rev. Mr. Foster, of Calvary Church, the venerable doctor rose in the pulpit, to which he had been supported by the Rev. Mr. Bray, and in a voice clear and distinct announced his text, which was taken from Psalm lxxvii, 10., "But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High." The rev. gentleman in his discourse gave some very interesting reminiscences of his ministry of 50 years. The Rev. Dr. has a number of relatives living in Brantford. James Wilkes, Esq., City Treasurer, is his brother, and like the venerable doctor, has just completed half a century of useful labor in connection with the Congregational Church in this place, having been for that length of time in connection with the Sunday School in some prominent position, and in the whole course of that 50 years he has not been absent, we believe, more than two or three Sundays from his duties. Other members of the family have at various times occupied seats at our Town and County Councils; in fact, the family has always obtained a prominent position amongst us.

(Hamilton "Spectator.")

The Montreal papers publish a jubilee sermon delivered by Rev. Dr. Wilkes, of Zion Church in that city, at the end of fifty years' ministry. The sermon abounds in interesting historical reminiscences and is pervaded by a tone of satisfaction with the results of a well-spent life, which will be most encouraging to many young men who are beset with some of the same difficulties which Dr. Wilkes had to encounter and conquer. From a small beginning he built up a prosperous congregation, though often ready to faint in the midst of financial and other troubles.